

The **AUTHOR & JOURNALIST**

OCTOBER, 1945

20 CENTS



Fast Sellers Are a Habit (James Hilton)—P. 3)

AUTHORS' AGENTS—TO USE OR NOT TO USE?

By Miriam Allen deFord

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR—A MARKET OVERLOOKED

By T. Morris Longstreth

NON-FICTION BOOKS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

By Elizabeth R. Montgomery

"I ROWED A BOAT TO DUBLIN"

By George H. Freitag

THE STUDENT WRITER DEPARTMENT

By Willard E. Hawkins

MOSTLY PERSONAL

By John T. Bartlett

THE NOVELIST

By Stanton A. Coblenz

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By JOHN T. BARTLETT, Co-Publisher



John T. Bartlett

Seemingly it was inevitable that "So Well Remembered," by James Hilton, published in August, a Literary Guild selection, should soon be high on best seller lists. Best sellers are a Hilton habit. "Good-bye, Mr. Chips," "Lost Horizon," "We Are Not Alone," and "Random Harvest," were notable book as well as motion picture successes. Hilton went to Hollywood to assist in the filming of his novels and has lived in Southern California most of the time since. He has done much miscellaneous writing for motion picture companies, and for his work on the film version of "Mrs. Miniver" received an Academy award.

Hilton is an Englishman, the son of a schoolmaster. "Good-bye, Mr. Chips," was the long short story, written in four days for the 1933 Christmas supplement of the *British Weekly*, which launched the Hilton career in America. *Atlantic Monthly* reprinted the story the following spring. Alexander Woolcott praised it on the radio and in *The New Yorker*, and an American edition in book form became a best seller. Eventually the story reached the screen, starring Robert Donat. The popularity of "Chips" led to American publication and filming of "Lost Horizon," which had been published in England, winning a literary prize, in 1933.

While a college undergraduate, James Hilton wrote for newspapers, and had his first novel published (at the age of 20—he is now 45.) He conducted a twice-a-week column for the *Dublin Irish Independent* for ten years, and for a time was a *London Daily Telegraph* book reviewer, reading 20 books a week and reporting on half-a-dozen.

According to a Little, Brown publicity release, Hilton's idea of "a pleasant Sunday" is to climb Southern California's Mt. San Antonio (alt. 10,000). How well he likes America may be gathered from the fact that since coming here in 1935 he has spent only a few weeks in England.

What began as an experiment in surveys, a fresh approach to an old question among writers, became for *The Author & Journalist* staff a delightful experience. The authors we've met (by mail) the past few weeks! (Glance at the tabulated lists on pages 6, 7 and 8.) Miriam Allen deFord, of San Francisco, collaborated with us in planning the study, and has been invaluable in other ways, including preparation of her excellent report and analysis, "Authors' Agents: To Use Or Not To Use?"

George H. Freitag ("I Rowed A Boat To Dublin") contributed "The Second First Novel" to our June, 1944, issue. He has written stories for *Atlantic Monthly*, *American Mercury* and other magazines, and is at work on a novel already under option to a motion picture company and a New York book publisher.

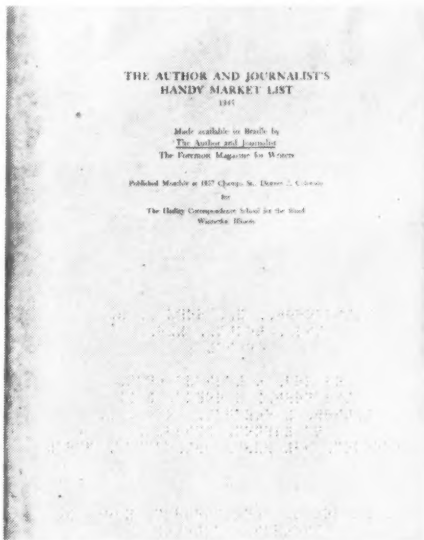
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Quaker, tutor, teacher of Latin and nature in a boys' school, T. Morris Longstreth ("Christian Science Monitor—A Market Overlooked") was invited to live at Lake Placid Club because of the chapter, "An Experiment in Intelligence," in his "The Adirondacks." After the Adirondacks phase, he was in Canada for ten years, much of the time with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, whose history he did. For five years in Washington, D. C., he freelanced, making *Colliers'*, *Liberty*, the *American Country Gentleman*—"but not regularly enough to be permanently seduced," he comments.

Since Pearl Harbor, Mr. Longstreth has lived in Concord, Mass., studying Thoreau. Westminster Press will publish his novel about Thoreau next spring, "Two Rivers Meet in Concord," his 25th book. His most popular juvenile is "Tad Lincoln" (Westminster Press), and he has done many juvenile serials (a subject on which we have commissioned him to write an article for *The Author & Journalist*.)

We show a photograph of the new Braille Edition of the Handy Market List. Actual size is 11 in. by 13½ in. The format is the same as that of the Braille Edition of *Readers' Digest*; the Handy Market List was produced in the same plant (American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, Ky.)

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(Continued on Page 16)

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THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

October, 1945

AUTHORS' AGENTS: TO USE OR NOT TO USE?

The Author & Journalist Seeks a Definitive Answer

. . . By MIRIAM ALLEN deFORD

For many years, queries have been coming in to *The Author & Journalist* from beginning authors—some who have published a few things, some who have published nothing as yet—as to whether or not it was desirable for a professional writer to employ an agent.

Feeling that the best way to find a definitive answer to the question was to go straight to the source, *The Author & Journalist* sent out a questionnaire to some 500 established American authors, asking them whether they employed an agent; if so, whom; whether they used agents only for special kinds of work; and whether there were any comments they could make which would be of help to young writers.

About half of those addressed, all busy men and women, took the time and trouble to answer, and most of these added valuable comments. Here is

another proof of the kindness and generosity of "arrived" authors to their younger colleagues and would-be colleagues.

The lists which follow are largely self-explanatory. They are: (I) An alphabetical list of agents mentioned (without addresses, since many agents do not seek clients directly, and others have all the clients on their list whom they are able to serve efficiently); (II) an alphabetical list of writers who answered that they did employ agents (including a few, not circularized, whose agents were already known from other sources), with the agents they named, and (III) an alphabetical list of authors answering that they did not employ agents, including some who had used agents in the past. Following the lists is a brief resumé of the most important comments made, and an attempt to sum up the (sometimes conflicting) advice given.

I. LIST OF AGENTS MENTIONED

A. General Agents

Maxwell Aley
Gertrude Algaze
Lurton Blasingame
Ed Bodin
Brandt & Brandt
George T. Bye
Jacques Chambrun
Curtis Brown, Ltd.
Ann Elmo
Barthold Fles
Blanche Gregory
Sally Harrison
Leland Hayward, Inc.
Henriette Herz
Carol Hill
Dr. Franz Horch
International Press Bureau
Otis A. Kline
August Lenniger
Maxim Lieber
Matson & Duggan
McIntosh & Otis

McKeogh & Boyd, Inc.
William Morris Agency, Inc.
Harold Ober
Mary Leonard Pritchett
Paul R. Reynolds & Son
Virginia Rice
Sydney A. Sanders
H. N. Swanson, Inc.
Ann Watkins, Inc.
Willis Kingsley Wing
Eve Woodburn
Rowe Wright

B. Motion Picture Agents

Adeline M. Alvord
Mary Baker
Stanley Bergerman
Ned Brown
Harold Freedman
Jules C. Goldstone
Nat Goldstone Agency
Cornwall Jackson
Sam Jaffee Agency

Lewis & Molson
Lichtig & Englander
A. & S. Lyons
John McCormick Agency
Selznick Agencies
Rosalie Stewart
Volck
Cora C. Wilkening
Annie Laurie Williams

C. Theatrical Agents

International Play Co.
Thomas Kane
Richard J. Madden
Audrey Wood

D. Radio Agents

Stix & Gude

E. English Agents

John Farquharson
Pearn, Pollinger and Higham
Brent Kenyon
A. P. Watt & Son

II. AUTHORS USING AGENTS

Abbott, Lawrence	Curtis Brown	Fox, Norman A.	Swanson for motion pictures.
Adams, Samuel Hopkins	Brandt	Furnas, J. C.	Brandt
Appel, Benjamin	(Name not given)	Gallico, Paul	Ober
Asch, Nathan	Lieber	Gardner, Erle Stanley	Wing
Atherton, Gertrude	Jules Goldstone		Jackson for motion pictures.
	No agent except for motion pictures.		Woodburn for books under pen names.
Atwater, M.M.	Lenniger	Garrett, Garret	Ober
Baldwin, Faith	Ober	Gauvreau, Emile	Lieber
"I've always had an agent. I wouldn't be without one."			Kenyon for European rights.
Balmer, Edwin	Chambrun	Glenn, Isa	Brandt
	Ober for collaborations with Philip Wylie.	Gollomb, Joseph	Chambrun
Banning, Margaret Culkin	Brandt	Guerard, Albert L., Sr.	Curtis Brown
Parrett, William E.	Sanders		Only occasional use.
Bartley, Nalbro	Brandt	Guerard, Albert J.	Curtis Brown
Eateman, Doris	Agent's name omitted at author's request.)	Hale, Nancy	Ober
		Havighurst, Walter	McIntosh & Otis
Beals, Carleton	Lieber	Haycox, Ernest	Sanders
Bechdolt, Frederick R.	Chambrun		Baker for motion pictures.
Bellah, James W.	Watkins	Heard, Gerald	Pearn, Pollinger and Higham for England; no American agent.
Benefield, Barry	Brandt	Herbst, Josephine	Lieber
Blackburn, Tom W.	Lenniger		Selznick for motion pictures.
Block, Libbie	Matson & Duggan	Heyward, Elaine	Lenniger
Bosworth, Allan R.	Lenniger	Holmes, L. P.	Lenniger
Boyle, Kay	Watkins	Horan, Kenneth	"Doubleday, Doran, my publishers."
Bristow, Gwen	Brandt		Jules Goldstone for motion pictures.
Bromfield, Louis	Bergerman	Hughes, Rupert	Chambrun
	No agent except for motion pictures.		"But not always."
Brown, Ruth	Bodin	Idell, Albert E.	Fles
Brush, Katharine	Ober	Irwin, Inez Haynes	Brandt
	Jules Goldstone for motion pictures.	Irwin, Will	Brandt
Burgess, Gelett	Bye	James, Marquis	Algaze
Eurks, Arthur J.	Bodin	Jennings, John E., Jr.	Matson & Duggan
Burt, Olive W.	Lenniger	John, William M.	Reynolds
Burt, Struthers	McIntosh & Otis	Jones, Nard	Brandt
Cain, James	Swanson	Josephson, Matthew	Ober
Caldwell, Erskine	Lieber	Joscelyn, Archie	Kline
	Jules Goldstone for motion pictures.	Kahler, Hugh McNair	Brandt
Carmer, Carl	Ober	Kantor, MacKinlay	Sanders
Cary, Lucian	Brandt	Kent, Louise Andrews	Williams for motion pictures and dramatic rights only. "For book publication prefer to deal directly with publisher."
Chamberlain, John	Algaze	Kerr, Sophie	International Play Co. for dramatic rights only.
"Champan, Maristan"	Brandt		
Charteris, Leslie	Wing	Kimbrough, Emily	Ober
Chase, Stuart	Watkins		Nat Goldstone for motion pictures.
Chevalier, Haakon M.	Lieber	Knight, Clifford	Matson & Duggan
Cloete, Stuart	McIntosh & Otis	Laing, Alexander	Watkins
Cozzens, James Gould	Brandt		Matson & Duggan "for certain specified Hollywood rights."
Craven, Thomas	Bye	Lane, Rose Wilder	Bye
cummings, e. e.	Brandt	Lea, Fanny Heaslip	Ober
Cunningham, Eugene	Curtis Brown	Lewis, Sinclair	Curtis Brown
	Lichtig & Englander for motion pictures.	Long, Julius	Chambrun
Dalrymple, Byron	Lenniger	Lorimer, Graeme and Sarah	Brandt
Daniels, Jonathan	Brandt		Freedman for motion pictures and radio.
Demarest, Phyllis Gordon	Bodin	MacHarg, William	Brandt
Derleth, August	Chambrun	MacInnes, Helen	Curtis Brown
Donnel, Jr., C. P.	Lenniger	Mason, F. VanWyck	Matson & Duggan
Dorais, Leon	Brandt	Maurois, Andre	Curtis Brown for books.
Downey, Fairfax	Reynolds		Chambrun for magazine articles.
Eaton, Evelyn	Watkins	Martin, Chuck	Lenniger
Fairbank, Janet Ayer	Reynolds	Mazet, Col. H. S.	Bodin
Fante, John	McIntosh & Otis	McCord, David	Ober
	Lewis & Molson for motion pictures.	McFee, William	Chambrun for stories and articles in U. S.
Farnham, Mateel Howe	McIntosh & Otis		Watt for all work, everywhere outside of U. S.
Ferguson, Charles W.	Reynolds	McKee, Ruth Eleanor	Volck and Selznick for motion pictures.
Fisher, Anne B.	McIntosh & Otis	McKenney, Ruth	Curtis Brown
Fisher, Dorothy Canfield	Reynolds		Nat Goldstone for motion pictures.
Fisher, Vardis	Curtis Brown	McNeil, Steve	Lenniger
Flavin, Martin	Fles		
	Madden for plays. Stewart for motion pictures.		
	Samuel French for amateur plays.		
Fleming-Roberts, G. T.	Lenniger		
Forbes, Esther	McKeogh & Boyd and Pritchett		

Meeker, Arthur J. Reynolds
Minnegerode, Meade McKeogh & Boyd
"I did not employ an agent until after I had
sold several stories and books."
Mitchell, Ruth Comfort Brandt
Montross, Lynn Gregory
Mullford, Clarence "Doubleday, Doran, for
motion pictures only."
Murry, John Middleton Harrison
Nolan, Jeannette Covert McIntosh & Otis
Nordhoff, Charles Brandt
..... Watt for England.
North, Sterling McCormick
No agent except for motion pictures.
Nye, Nelson C. Curtis Brown, Herch, Wing
Jules Goldstone for motion pictures.
Ogden, George W. Alvord
No agent except for motion pictures.
Ostenso, Martha McKeogh & Boyd
Oursler, Fulton Chambrun
Page, Elizabeth "For motion pictures my
publisher and Rosalie Stewart."
Parmenter, Christine Whiting International Press
Bureau for second serial rights.
Farquharson for England. No agent for other work.
Parsons, Alice Beal McIntosh & Otis
Partridge, Bellamy Aley
Patterson, Norma Wright
Payne, Stephen Wing for book sales
Peattie, Donald Culross (Literary and motion
picture; names not given.)
Perkins, Kenneth Sanders
Pinkerton, Kathrene and Robert E. Brandt
Poole, Ernest Wing
Powell, Dawn Hill
Brandt for plays.
Pratt, Fletcher Curtis Brown
Price, E. Hoffmann Lenniger
Kline for foreign rights except British.
Quick, Dorothy Kline
Roberts, Kenneth Ober
"For everything except my novels."
Ross, Lillian Bos McKeogh & Boyd
Nat Goldstone for motion pictures.
Ross, Nancy Wilson Ober
Rush, Alice and William M. Blessingame
Russell, John Brandt
Scherf, Margaret Morris
Schmidt, Sarah Lindsay McIntosh & Otis
Scott, Margaret Bodin
Scott, Reva McCormick
No agent except for motion pictures.
Seghers, Anna Lieber
Seifert, Elizabeth Blessingame
Shaftel, G. A. Sanders
Swanson for motion pictures.
Shannon, Lytle Kline
Sheean, Vincent Brandt
"Carol Hill was my agent for 18 years; now
gone into motion picture field."
Smith, Betty "My attorneys handle all my work."
Smith, H. Allen Matson & Duggan
Spencer, Claire Curtis Brown
Siegner, Wallace Brandt
Steinbeck, John McIntosh & Otis
Stewart, Donald Ogden Hayward
Stong, Phil Matson & Duggan
Street, Julian Brandt
"Used occasionally."
Stringer, Arthur Reynolds
Kane for dramatic rights.
Wilkening for motion pictures.
Tarkington, Booth Brandt
Thane, Elswyth Bye
"Sometimes" Not for books.
Jules Goldstone for motion pictures.
Tilden, Freeman Ober
Thurber, James McCormick for motion pictures;
Stix & Gude for radio.
Turnbull, Agnes Sligh Reynolds
Tuttle, W. C. (Motion picture agent;
name not given.)
"Unidentified, please." Williams for motion pictures;
Reynolds for magazines.
Upson, William H. Brandt
Van de Water, Frederic E. Sanders
van Paassen, Pierre Chambrun
"For articles only, not for books."
Walker, Mildred Wing
Walworth, Dorothy Rice
"For shorter fiction and serializing of novels
which I sell direct."
Weber, Lenora M. Brandt
Weidman, Jerome Brandt
Weiman, Rita (At agent's request, author
did not release name.)
Wells, Lee E. Lenniger
Wescott, Glenway Morris
Wetjen, Albert R. Brandt
White, Stewart Edward Brandt
Widdemer, Margaret Aley
Wiley, Hugh Chambrun
Williams, Wythe Bye
Wilson, Charles Morrow Jaffee
No agent except for motion pictures.
Winslow, Thyra Samter Elmo
Morris and Lyons for motion pictures.
Winter, Ella Hayward
Winwar, Frances Watkins
Woodford, Jack Blessingame
Woodward, Helen and William E. Ober
Worthington, Marjorie Matson & Duggan
Wylie, I. A. R. Brandt
Wylie, Philip Ober
Young, Gordon Sanders
Young, Stanley Ober
Wood for dramatic rights.

III. AUTHORS NOT USING AGENTS

Adams, James Truslow
Aydelotte, Dora
Bacon, Leonard
Bailey, Temple
Baker, Karle Wilson
Barker, S. Omar
Barrett, E. Boyd
Barzun, Jacques
Beard, Charles A.—"I once did a piece of work at
the suggestion of a publisher's agent."

Becker, May Lamberton—"Everything I have ever
written has been asked for by a publisher."
Bishop, Morris
Brown, John Mason
Burton, Jean
Chamberlain, George Agnew—"If an agent brings
me an outright commission. . . . Otherwise
all my dealings are direct."
Corbett, Elizabeth
Cuppy, Will

Davis, Lavinia R.—"Have used services of my publisher, Doubleday Doran, for selling rights on adult mystery novel such as paper-bound edition, second serial etc."

De Kruij, Paul

Devoe, Alan

DeVoto, Bernard

Easman, Max

Farley, Ralph Milne—"Have occasionally employed agents for special jobs."

Fergusson, Erna

Franck, Harry A.

Gessler, Clifford—"Not at present."

Gilpatric, Guy—"Had an agent before the war, when I lived in Europe."

Goddard, Gloria

Grattan, C. Hariley—"Implies no judgment on the utility of agents."

Hauser, Heinrich

Hawthorne, Hildegard

Hicks, Granville—"If I wrote short fiction, I should want an agent."

Holbrook, Stewart

Hill, Grace Livingston

Howe, M. A. DeWolfe—"If I were 50 or 60 years younger, I think I should employ an agent."

Johnson, Josephine W.

Jones, Howard Mumford

Jordan-Smith, Paul

Keeler, Harry Stephen

King, Rufus

Krutch, Joseph Wood—"My writing is almost invariably contracted for before it is written."

Litsey, Edward Carlile

MacManus, Seumas

Mavity, Nancy Barr—"My contacts have been direct with book publisher and newspaper syndicate, which latter has acted as magazine agent on occasion."

Means, Florence Crannell—"I'd certainly use an agent if I were doing short stories."

McCleary, Dorothy

Mencken, H. L.

Mowrer, Lillian T.

Nason, Leonard H.

Nathan, George Jean

Nevins, Allan—"Probably I should; but I have never done so except for short times; I need no agent for my books, and never write magazine articles except on commission from an editor."

Newhouse, Edward—"Both of my editors are friends of mine and there wouldn't be much point in working through an intermediary."

Nicholson, Meredith—"Write and keep writing with an eye on the market."

Nicolay, Helen

Pinckney, Josephine—"For my current novel I have assigned the moving picture and dramatic rights to my publishers under a special arrangement, and they have employed Lyons."

Pringle, Henry F.

Raine, William McLeod—"Not at present"; formerly Brandt "for many years."

Randolph, Vance—"My stuff is mostly ordered or at least suggested by an editor."

Repplier, Agnes

Rinehart, Mary Roberts—"Very few agents when I began to write. Since then I have liked my personal contacts with editors."

Roberts, W. Adolphe—"I prefer maintaining close personal relations with my publisher, who has an agent to take care of motion picture rights, etc., for all the firm's authors."

Rutledge, Archibald

Seton, Ernest Thompson—"I believe that in most cases it is an advantage for the beginning writer to employ an agent."

Seymour, Flora Warren

Snedeker, Caroline Dale—"My books have always been put forth by Doubleday Doran or some other publisher known personally. However, an agent should help a beginner . . ."

Stafford, Jean—"I always send my work to small literary magazines where I generally know the editors or to large magazines whose fiction editors invite me to submit mss."

Starrett, Vincent—"I have in the past employed various agents."

Stribling, T. S.—"I once employed an agent for radio—nothing else."

Strode, Hudson—"I recommend agents to other writers."

Swanson, Neil H.

Thayer, Tiffany—"But I'm kind to them!"

Towne, Charles Hanson—"Verse is my specialty and agents do not handle it."

Vandercook, John W.—"Never have; but perhaps I have been mistaken."

White, E. B.

Wiggam, Albert Edward—"I have tried five or six."

Williams, Albert Rhys—"Just don't happen to have one now."

Winther, Sophus K.—"The publisher accepted my first and each subsequent novel directly from me. But I think it would have been and still would be to my advantage to have an agent."

Wood, Clement—"As my article in A. & J. said, they can't sell my stuff. I wish they could."

Woods, Cleo

What the Authors Say

The opinions on the necessity and value of agents made by authors extend all the way from ecstatic praise to violent invective. "A good agent is a necessity, even more valuable than a typewriter," says Lillian Bos Ross. "The fee frees a writer to write: foreign rights, contracts, reprints—all taken care of. Peace, it's wonderful!" And Emile Gauvreau agrees: "Agents are necessary to a professional writer. A writer has no time to fool around trying to sell his stuff. He can't promote himself. That is the agent's job."

At the other extreme, E. Boyd Barrett says succinctly: "Young authors should begin by 'ringing door bells';" while Heinrich Hauser, perhaps influenced by his European background, answers flatly:

"Do not believe in agents. Consider whole system as detrimental to intimate, personal relationship between author and publisher. Direct collaboration between them would greatly benefit American literature. Agent system imprisons author and publisher in ivory towers."

Both these viewpoints find strong support. As for the first, Gordon Young points out that "editors depend more and more on agents to supply needs: good agents maintain close contact with possible markets—also give explicit advice on story treatment and revision." Samuel Hopkins Adams makes almost the same point: "A good agency not only increases the client's earning capacity, but saves him endless detail, and also acts as technical adviser." The

chance to slough off business details is welcomed by many authors. "I have no time to discuss contracts or keep publishers' accounts," remarks Andre Maurois. "My job is to write. The business side is better left to the agent." Margaret Scherf, Sarah Lindsay Schmidt, and Dorothy Walworth all speak in the same vein. Wythe Williams sums it up by saying: "Perhaps an author lives who has enough business brain to talk terms with a publisher—but I never heard of him." (Mr. Williams, meet Mr. James Truslow Adams, who "had a business training before I began seriously as a writer.")

From those who, like Libbie Block, think "writers should have business details cared for by experts," we come to those who believe with Mateel Howe Farnham that "agents probably are necessary evils." "A good agent is an author's right hand," says Struthers Burt, adding "whether you like it or not." The more successful an author is, I. A. R. Wylie thinks, "the more he needs someone to take care of him financially." "An agent is invaluable but not infallible," Graeme Lorimer reminds us. The necessity of securing a good agent is stressed by Charles Nordhoff and Esther Forbes; and Phil Stong warns "there are about a dozen good agents" (a few more than that, as a matter of fact) "and a thousand useless ones" "The personal relation is most important," Glenway Wescott adds. "This may be depressing or confusing—or stimulating and wonderfully helpful; as between my agent and myself." The crux of the matter lies in Freeman Tilden's statement: "By all means an agent, as soon as a reputable high-class agent considers you worth his while."

The point, that the young writer, who perhaps needs an agent most, finds it most difficult to be accepted by a good one, is stressed by many authors, and contradicted only by Edwin Carlile Litsey, who says that while he has never employed an agent, he would recommend one for the beginner, "providing the agent was capable and sympathetic," and by Albert Guerard, Sr. But, remarks James M. Cain, "unknown writers cannot get a good agent. They should peddle the stuff themselves, to learn how, then later get an agent to save them trouble." Anne B. Fisher makes a helpful suggestion: "I think the new writer is better paying an outright critic to help him and then selling his own stuff. Many agents are not good critics." August Derleth agrees: "For beginners who are willing to pay for revision, advice, etc., the reading-fee agencies can be recommended." Charles Morrow Wilson has another objection: "Strongly advise new writers to avoid

agents. Latter tend to thwart beginners' personal contact with editors."

There are agents and agents. As "Marstan Chapman" (Mary and Stan Chapman) puts it: "Beginners should have clearly explained the difference between regular agents and the 'come-on' agents who charge reading fees and 'promise success.'" (Though some reputable agents do charge reading fees to unknown writers.) But even granted that the agent is a good one, many authors agree with Albert E. Idell that "just any agent isn't enough. You must have the right one for you. My agent and I speak the same language and I wouldn't think of submitting a manuscript without his critical analysis first. On the other hand, I have several writer friends who have had nothing but bad experiences with well-known, supposedly top-notch agents. The fault may be the author's. Writers are apt to get pretty prima-donna-ish, I've noticed, and unreasonable. I think that the larger agents cannot give the time or effort to an individual to the extent that I receive from mine. I try, though, to make no unreasonable demands upon him, such as knowing every time he licks a postage stamp for my account, or writing day by day reports on the movements of my manuscripts"—a very important point. As Mr. Idell says, if an agent spends all his time writing to his clients, he couldn't be "peddling their material."

Many authors write in terms of admiration and affection of their own agents. "Wonderful," "beneficial and profitable," "perfect satisfaction," "every aid and advice that a writer can imagine or need," "extremely helpful"—these are phrases culled from the comments of writers as varied as Fulton Oursler, Ruth McKenney, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Margaret Cushman, Frederick R. Becholdt, and Charles W. Ferguson.

But over and over the authors answering the questionnaire strike the note that agents mean most—and are most accessible—to already established authors. "It is now harder for a newcomer to get an agent than to get a publisher," says Dawn Powell. "The leaders, I've found, are averse to taking on unknown and untrained beginners." "No agent can 'make' an author who is not there," Matthew Josephson remarks sensibly, but adds that even agencies "hospitable to promising young authors" are forced to limit their numbers. "Agents seldom have time for new authors. Young people had best find a young agent who is ready to carry round and sell their work. Big agents are too busy with their big offices," is Gerald Heard's advice. Echoes of this opinion come from William E. Barrett, who says "the beginner will learn more by submitting directly and profiting by editorial advice," and from Clifford Knight, Archie Joscelyn, "Maristan" Chapman, Barry Benefield, and William McKee. "No agent can sell a manuscript that does not meet the editorial needs and no editor turns down a manuscript that measures up," Donald Culross Peattie has some sound counsel:

"The purpose of an agent is to save an already successful and productive author a great deal of mechanical bother and to get him higher prices for his work. I doubt if an agent can get high prices for an unknown author's work—that is, any higher than he can get for himself. . . . I think it is possibly dangerous for beginning writers to think they can lean upon the name of a well-known agent; they should think that they have nothing to lean on except the merit of their work."

Many authors point out that in their opinion agents are useful for some kinds of writing but not for others. These include Leonard Nason ("when a publisher is dealing with an author not known to



him"); Henry F. Pringle and Fletcher Pratt (for fiction); Alexander Laing ("for secondary and foreign sales—and for charging what the market will bear when it's a big market"); Kenneth Perkins ("for one who does not live in New York"); Thomas Craven (for radio and screen); Thyra Samter Winslow (for screen); and Nancy Barr Mavity ("for short magazine fiction—not necessary for book-length material"—which contradicts Fletcher Pratt's "should always be used in case of books"). "It depends entirely on your material as to whether you need one or not," says Josephine Herbst, and Eugene Cunningham agrees: "It seems to me each writer is a rule to himself. My experience has been mixed, but I swear by the ones I have now, as I've sworn at some others." Three writers—Julian Street, Vance Randolph, and Fairfax Downey—suggest that writers join the Authors' League of America and take its advice.

There remains a sizable list of authors who are opposed to or critical of all agents and of the whole agent-system. "Why cut them in when you've battled your own way up without their help?" asks Reva Scott (who, however, has an agent for motion pictures). Clee Woods thinks "the disadvantages outweigh the advantages considerably." "I feel that beginning writers do not generally benefit from an agent," says William MacLeod Raine, and gives his reasons:

"All good agents have eight or ten prominent customers whose work has to be placed; if not, that customer will be lost. Since said customer's work usually sells readily and at a good price, the agent's efforts must be concentrated on disposing of his product."

"An agent's commercial slant usually interferes with his artistic judgment," is Dorothy McCleary's opinion, "so that a writer of spontaneous, artistic stories is merely frustrated by an agent." "Of late, authors' agents look for stories that have movie possibilities, or at least 'slick magazine' futures," says Paul Jordan-Smith in the same vein. "For the writer with neither in mind an agent is unnecessary." "A connection with an established publisher is perhaps hard to obtain," remarks Leonard Bacon, "but it can often be obtained without an agent. I don't think agents help much." "An agent cannot sell anything of a writer's that the writer cannot himself sell, but can obtain a slightly better price if the thing is bought," Harry Stephen Keeler thinks. Alice Beal Parsons does not agree with the former statement; she says the answer lies with the publisher, not the author, and believes that "publishers pay more attention to an agent-submission." Neil H. Swanson is on Mr. Keeler's side: "I believe that in general publishers read manuscripts just as hopefully without an agent's suggestion." Benjamin Appel, though he himself employs agents in New York and Hollywood, thinks that "speaking in general, most agents, like other citizens, when successful lose the energy of earlier years. This affects those writers who are 'grim,' 'unpleasant,' etc." And Nelson C. Nye states that "although I do employ agents, and have had many others before them, I cannot honestly say but what I do quite as well without them." Will Cuppy, who "can't write when someone is driving me on," says cynically: "Of course, young writers in general should have agents if the agents want them. But are there such agents?"

Not to leave the beginning author completely discouraged, here is a more heartening opinion from Janet Ayer Fairbank:

"My experience with an agent has been 100% satisfactory. Nine times out of ten if a new writer

has something which indicates future progress it is to an agent's advantage to be interested in selling his work. I should think it would be impossible for a young writer to secure the immediate attention which a good agent can guarantee."

And now, what conclusions may be drawn from this survey, which will be of help to the puzzled beginner?

Here are 270-odd professional authors. Some 70% of them use agents. Of those who do not, nearly half say they wish they had, or recommend that others do so. Certainly few authors are in a position to handle properly such rights as motion picture and radio. The "agent system"—in spite of a very few of these answers—is no longer a controversial issue. Like the horseless carriage, it has come to stay.

So far as any individual writer is concerned, he must decide for himself whether his temperament, and the kind of writing he does, put him with the majority who find profit in employing agents, or the relatively few who do not. The scope of the literary agent has grown vastly in the past quarter century, and most of those opposed to the system are either foreigners now living in America or writers no longer young. Harry A. Franck (now Major Harry Franck) remarked in his reply that in 1908, when he started to write, there were no literary agents. That is not entirely accurate, but to all intents and purposes, there were none in the present sense.

So far as my own experience goes, I have been a professional writer for nearly 40 years. I have had agents in the past, and I have none at present. I am inclined to think that agents are desirable for most kinds of work and most kinds of authors, but not for all. Ask yourself what your aim is, what audience you want to reach, and make your decision on the basis of your self-analysis.

But above all, pick your agent as carefully, almost, as you would pick your wife or husband. Agents, like the little girl, when they are good are very, very good, and when they are bad they are horrid. Your agent may in great part make or mar your professional career. Perhaps the best advice I can give is to tell you to pick out from this list the two or three authors whose work you most admire and would most like to emulate, and follow their advice. Perhaps—who knows—you may some day be accepted by their agents as well!

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H. S. Nemeroff of Merry-Day House, Inc., 421 Hudson St., New York 14, writes A. & J. that Rule 2 in the brochure covering rules of its Juvenile Contest which closes October 15, 1945, should be clarified. If a self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed, "Merry-Day House will make an earnest effort to return all contributions which do not receive prizes, but no guarantee is made by it that such contributions shall be returned." Writes Mr. Nemeroff, "We have no intention of retaining manuscripts which do not win prizes and which will not be accepted for publication. We do, however, wish to *absolve ourselves from any responsibility while the manuscripts are in the hands of the carrier.*"

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NOVELIST

By STANTON A. COBLENTZ

He rules his characters! So they avow
Who never wrote a tale, not guessing how
He but records their every ruse and whim,
While they dictate the story, ruling **him!**

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR —A MARKET OVERLOOKED

. . . By T. MORRIS LONGSTRETH

The *Christian Science Monitor* buys about 300 essays a year for its Home Forum Page and upwards of 100 essays a year for its editorial page. The length of essay desired is about 1000 words, and the payment averages around two cents a word.

The *Christian Science Monitor* is an international newspaper. It is read in every English-speaking corner of the globe. And every corner of the globe contributes to its columns: the soldier and farmer, the tight-rope walker, and poet, the traveller, the girl rancher, and the authority on this and that. To write for the *Monitor* is to have your name in one of the best shop-windows of the literary world.

The contributor of essays for the Home Forum Page should buy half a dozen consecutive issues to get some idea of the essay type desired. He will find that the style is extremely elastic. Good taste is the criterion. The result is as if a practising journalist had taken a morning off to describe some place or person he wanted to share, or to tell some experience that struck him as ludicrous or enchanting. The piece is almost conversational, and the writer naturally avoids the gaucheries he would avoid in a living-room—the stilted, the too quaint, the self-conscious, the vulgar.

The subject may be almost anything you can make interest. The *Christian Science Monitor* is a newspaper and not a propaganda sheet for Christian Science. The only reference to Christian Science in its pages is a daily religious article on this Home Forum Page. There are, however, a few restrictions pertaining to the editorial policy of this Page. The essays must avoid profanity, physical love, death, and too much woe, just as one would at the polite dinner-table. The Page is a sort of sanctuary to which readers may resort when they want something pleasant. I suppose to be "refreshing" is the note desired. In the remainder of the paper the problems and agonies of the world are written up; on the Home Forum Page the subscriber in Shanghai, Vancouver, the Australian bush, or 10 Downing Street, London, can be sure of finding something amusing, fascinating, worthwhile, something that stays in the memory like a glimpse of the Matterhorn or a driving snow or Churchill entering the White House.

And *you*—which is the purpose of this article—can have the satisfaction of purveying this pleasure to shepherd or premier in your own way. You will be let alone to write in your own way. The editor tampers with you not at all. On the editorial page the atmosphere is even freer. Read John Gould's reports from his Maine farm and see. Mr. Gould is well on the way to becoming our leading humorist, for he is not merely funny. His head may be in the clouds with Aristophanes and Will Rogers, but his feet are on the soil. He manages to make common sense the most alluring thing in the world, mainly by laughing at the imbecilities in fashion. The *Monitor* was Mr. Gould's springboard into the *New York Times Sunday Magazine's* high-paying columns, but I notice that he stays faithful to the *Monitor*. He probably appreciates his international audience.

How to be accepted? By having something that

you crave to tell the world, and then telling the world (literally) in a thousand words. The secret of essay writing is desire. The subject mustn't be sought; it comes. It rolls off your typewriter effortlessly—even if you have to rewrite the piece half a dozen times—because it flows from the heart. You are bursting to vent your ire or praise or scorn or pride or any other mood. If it isn't effortless it isn't a good essay. If it isn't a mood it isn't an essay at all. Then it is an article, a dictum, an opinion, a short-short without the surprise, but no essay. It can be full of fact, as is Stewart Edward White's immortal little intermezzo in "The Forest"—*On Lying Awake At Night*; it may be just the irony of a title, like *Nocturne*, Simeon Strunsky's picture of Night Court. But it must be your mood, an imparting of what's on your mind but urbanely, inadvertently. Both general and unique. General, so that most people can enjoy it, and unique, that is sincere, so that they may know it is yours, like a personal letter.

I took no thought about the first essay I sold to the *Monitor*. For ten years I had been living at Lake Placid Club. My windows framed the Sentinel Range, fir-clad to the summits, and with a skyline of heart-searching harmony. One winter evening the color was even more arresting than usual and I said to myself, "The most beautiful place in the world." I'd seen the Jungfrau, the Norwegian fiords, the most wonderful of all estates—the Czar's outside St. Petersburg, now destroyed by those never-to-be-sufficiently damned Germans—and still I felt that for me these slopes of the Sentinels were actually the most beautiful place on earth. So I said it on paper and sent it in. That was twenty years ago, and there have been few months since when I haven't had a useful check from the *Monitor* for the expression of some other conviction or remembered pleasure.

The essay is largely a by-product of a writer's life. Occasionally, as in "One Man's Meat," it turns out to be a gold-mine. But usually it brings in just amusement money. Yet in the essay a man can be himself. He can have fun. For my essays I needed an end man, someone to call zany and prop up opposite opinions, and so I created a postmaster, Nicholas Pumble. Since he had to live somewhere, I created a village, Evergreen, N. Y. Since one man doesn't make a village, I gave him neighbors. I played with those people as a father plays with his son's electric train. Yet it was not fiction—no plot. The fans began to write in. I made friends that still are friends. One letter from South Africa came from a woman whose sister had recently passed on, and she wanted me to know that the last words on that sister's lips were "Nicholas Pumble."

Essays will do that for you. Essays in the *Christian Science Monitor*, anyway.

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Farm and Ranch, Main and 2nd Sts., Dallas, Texas, pays for most material 1 to 2 cents a word, but more for articles which have required extensive research. All material must be of interest to Southern agriculturists. Frank A. Briggs is editor.

NON-FICTION BOOKS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

. . . By ELIZABETH RIDER MONTGOMERY



Elizabeth Montgomery

Looking through my notebook for an idea to write about, in a rare interval between books, I came across the phrase, "Why things were made." Just that. When or why I jotted it down, I have no recollection. But those four little words started me on a project that bids fair to shape my writing reputation.

I began to wonder: Why were things made—articles we use every day—the radio, the telephone, the typewriter? Being a writer, my interest naturally centered on the typewriter. I started to read the history of the tool of my trade. The story of its beginning caught my fancy, and I wrote it up for teen-age boys and girls, although I had never before written for any age above primary.

But I found I couldn't stop there. In looking for information about the typewriter I had come across intriguing bits about other modern conveniences, which haunted me. So I decided to do a short series of dramatized articles on great inventions.

In spite of me, the short series grew up. It became a book of forty-four stories behind inventions. As I worked I became more and more interested in the subject. I just couldn't leave it alone. I found that almost any invention has a story behind it if you look far enough to find it. Everything I saw or used or read about prompted the inevitable questions: Who thought it up, and how come?

When "The Story Behind Great Inventions" was finally published, I drew a deep breath, called it a day, and went back to my original line of writing for small children. But the publisher had different ideas. "Can you do another book right away to follow this? If so, what?"

Now, I am never one to disregard an editorial request, so I looked through my files. In gathering data for the first book, I had found twice as much material as I could use. Being of Scotch temperament, I had not discarded any of it. There it was, ready and waiting—enough for another book. But when I began to organize it, I saw that it was not sufficiently homogeneous for a single book. What I really had was the beginnings of three books, instead. I wrote to the publisher and suggested the three possibilities: two new invention books, for which I had considerable data, and a book on medical history for juveniles, for which I had only a couple of articles.

You guessed it. They chose the medical book. And they got it—"The Story Behind Great Medical Discoveries," which the Junior Literary Guild promptly chose as one of their fall selections. Now I am working on a third "Story Behind" book, and have half a dozen more planned. Whether I like it or not, I am now a writer for teen-age boys and girls.

But I like it. Non-fiction for children is a fascinating field. It has a lot to recommend it. It has all the advantages of both book-length and magazine writing: the continuity of subject matter keeps you

working until the book is finished; there is no period of waiting, when one article is completed, trying to decide what to write about next. Yet each chapter is separate; you do not lose your train of thought when you stop at the end of an article.

Then, too, the material has sales possibilities both in magazine and in book form, and that's an item. Juvenile magazines and Sunday School papers are always looking for good non-fiction, and though the pay is small, the sale of a group of eight or ten articles at once brings a nice, encouraging check.

Moreover, you need never run out of material. Everything is grist to your mill. You can write about astronomy or anthropology, about atomic energy or agriculture—and there is all the rest of the alphabet as well. Contrary to popular opinion, I believe (and I've had considerable experience to back this belief) that children *want* to learn. They want to learn *everything*. Only—and this is where the juvenile non-fiction writer comes in—they want the process of learning to be painless. They prefer to assimilate knowledge by a sort of osmosis, rather than having to chew and swallow it. So if you can present facts in an interesting and dramatic manner, non-fiction for boys and girls should be an excellent field for you. And if you choose a line that can be a series, your life-work is cut out.

In non-fiction you don't have to create characters; they are already made for you. All you have to do is find out about them, and then make them live for children. Of course, that's the catch: finding out all about the people (or the scientific facts, as the case may be) that you want to present. Research is at once the drudgery and the appeal of non-fiction.

Research begins long before you are ready to find out the details of your hero's life. (By "hero" I mean the central figure of your opus, whether it's a new plant or a prehistoric man.) First there is your subject to choose. Of course, in my first book, I didn't choose the subject; it chose me. And the second one more or less "snuck up" on me. But I learned my lesson. From now on, I do the selecting. It's much easier to work with your eyes open.

A few tips on choosing the subject may be in order here. First of all, take a field in which you are genuinely interested. Whether or not you are well versed in it doesn't matter so much as your enthusiasm; you can always learn if you like your subject. My field is history—not so much events as the people who were instrumental in bringing them about.

Second, consider whether your book would have any tie-in with school courses. This is not a matter of crusading for proper education; it is a matter of cold money. If the book is good supplementary reading in science or nature study or history, more books will be bought than if it is merely a good book for a young person to read. Teachers in your local schools will be of help on that point. They know what should be useful.

Third, find out what has been done in the line you have chosen. The library is your ally there. If

you enter an already over-written field, as I did with my invention book, you must have a new approach, or something else to offer which will make your book stand out. Mine was the human-interest angle, as well as the simplicity of the technical descriptions.

When you are sure that you have an interesting field which has not been over-done, and one which will have sales possibilities, you are ready to survey that field to see what should be included in your book. If possible, consult experts for their opinions. And read, read, read. In working on "The Story Behind Great Inventions," (once I had discovered it was to be a book in place of a short series) I skimmed through many volumes of invention history to see what inventions were considered great by different authorities.

During all of this preliminary work, keep a record of your findings, with references. I have found filing cards best for this—the 3 by 5 size. Whenever I came across an invention that someone said was great, I wrote the inventor's name on a card, with his invention beside it. Underneath went the name of the book mentioning him, with the pages concerning his life and work. By the time my survey was complete, I had, listed alphabetically, twice as many inventors as I could possibly use. But that was all to the good. If I couldn't readily find enough material on one to do an authentic article, I discarded it. If, on sober reflection, I decided that a certain invention wasn't as important as it was cracked up to be, or was too similar to another to be included, I tossed it out. . . . Of course, I don't mean literally threw it away. As I said before, I keep all unused material. I never know when I'll want to write another book into which it will fit.

When you know pretty well what there is to write about in your line, organize your material. This organization may be chronological, topical, functional, etc., depending on the type of thing you are doing.

And now you are ready for the real work. It is time to gather your data. You already have, from your preliminary survey, a few references on each filing card. Now you must get more . . . and more. I have found that, in jotting down references, it's a good idea to star the especially good ones. Then, if you can't get all the books from the library at once that you want for a certain chapter, you can at least be sure of getting a couple of good ones. In addition, if the library is rather inaccessible for you, it is worthwhile to copy two or three of the best references in their entirety, with the source. When I find good material in magazines, I go to second-hand book stores and buy those magazines. Then I cut out the articles and file them for ready reference. This sometimes runs into money, as when I paid fifty cents apiece for five-cent magazines of twenty or thirty years ago. But to me it is worth it in the time saved.

As I gather these references, I put on the back of each card names, dates, and details of the person's life as I run across them. It is surprising how hard it is to find, when you're ready to write a certain chapter, the name of the fellow who was working in the laboratory with the inventor—though you are sure you saw it somewhere. Or whether he had finished school at the time of his great discovery, or was married; or wore bright ties, or was tongue-tied. Such things may not be important in your story—in fact, you may not even mention them. But knowing these details gives your writing a power, an authenticity that it will lack if you work from merely the pertinent facts of the case. In other words, gather more material than you need—far more. It pays.

Then on to the actual writing. That is where the fun comes in. By now you are steeped in your subject. You eat and sleep and live with inventors or scientists or doctors, or whatever your subject is. Some of them, at least, you feel you know as well as you do the people on your street. Start with those, no matter where they come in your book. If you begin with the easiest chapters, you will work readily into a style and a swing that will help carry you over the difficult ones. (That's where non-fiction has it over fiction: it's pretty difficult to skip around in writing a story.) Then, too, by writing first the parts you are best prepared for, you can continue research on the hard spots in your spare time.

I am always careful to tie in my subject with the young reader's life, in order to catch his interest. To hold that interest, I dramatize my material. That's where all those homely little details I mentioned earlier come in. In straight narrative, you can *tell* how a man made a certain discovery, and the place might be either Mars or Hades so far as the reader is concerned. But if you are going to *show* that event—to make that discovery take place before the reader's eyes—you must know (and indicate) what sort of place it was, what the people were like, how they felt, etc.

One of the greatest dangers in the writing of juvenile non-fiction, I've found, is the temptation to tell too much. You have gathered such a wealth of material (all of it interesting and important in your eyes) that you want to pass it on. Don't do it. Children can take only so much information at once. Highlight one or two important incidents, and summarize the rest if you feel it has to go in. Keep explanations simple and to the point. Boys and girls—as well as many adults—will skip involved descriptions.

Titles are important. Snappy titles for your chapters will help a lot. Some of my titles which seemed to be eye-catchers were "Anchored Airplane," "Bedrooms on Wheels," "The Key That Became a Clue," from "The Story Behind Great Inventions." And "Boiled Hands," "When Sugar Is a Murderer," "The Stomach With a Window," from "The Story Behind Great Medical Discoveries." Intriguing titles will start young people reading in spite of themselves, and the appeal of your style should keep them going.

If possible, get two or three children of the right age to read your manuscript. You may not learn a thing, if they are the type that says everything is either "swell" or "lousy." But, again, you may learn a great deal—especially where you bogged down in too much technical information. A reading by a sympathetic teacher will give you even more help, for a good teacher sometimes understands better than the children themselves why they do or don't like a book.

Finally, when making the last copy, be sure to have an extra carbon besides what you think you will need. You never can tell. You hope, of course, to sell first serial rights in addition to book rights; and you might sell radio rights; or even—incredible as it seems—movie rights. A lot is being done these days in educational films, and if you should sell to the movies (I haven't so far, but I know it's possible) you would hit the jack-pot.



The Watchman, Southern Publishing Co., Nashville 8, Tenn., is not in the market for any articles at the present time.

"I ROWED A BOAT TO DUBLIN"

. . . By GEORGE H. FREITAG

I don't think writers who set about purposely and premeditatedly to slant a story derive from the actual writing of it any feeling of genuineness. It seems to me that something is lost of the thrill of creation. From the writers who do purposely slant their pieces I suppose I shall hear rants and ravings. But I have written and sold some forty stories and many to good magazines, and not a single one was in any way slanted. The most important thing to remember when you are writing a story is to write it so that you too are going to enjoy it, and if, indeed, you are an average man, an average woman, the chances that it will sell are enormous, provided you wrote it well.

When my own stories do not sell to one market I try another. I try the same story seven, eight, nine times. If the story hasn't sold by the ninth time I have enough faith in my ability to market stories to throw the thing out, get finished with it. It's no good. This idea that a story has got to be slanted toward a particular and definite market is to my way of thinking bushwa. Bushwa is a fancy term for baloney. And baloney is that stuff you used to eat before meat rationing.

Maybe I think I am pretty smart sitting here on my sun porch listening to the rain on the roof, writing about how I don't slant a story. There is nothing smart about it. The only time a writer ought to slant for a particular and individual market is when he has been asked to write something for that magazine and has, therefore, a pretty good chance of acceptance. The editor of this magazine didn't ask me, point blank, for this piece. The reason I am writing it is because I have the urge to write something down. I live near a blue lake. I am sitting on my sun porch watching the little drops of rain splash in the lake. My red boat is down there through the trees; I can see it from here; it has, lettered on its side, my daughter's name. I lettered it myself, using white paint. I was sitting here awhile ago wondering how long it would take me to go from this house to Dublin by water. I did not think of this ghastly trip in terms of calculation and mileage; I thought of it in pictures and could see myself going in my little red boat from this sun porch to Dublin in the rain.

After I had gone a little ways (this trip being taken, of course, in my head and while all along I am sitting here very comfortably on the porch) I wondered how to begin writing such a story. Other ideas just as crazy, just as out of step with convention, have come to me, and I have written them into stories and they have sold. Several of the stories made three or four trips but in the end everything sold and my desk drawer was vulnerable to an echo.

I can't sit down the way I am sitting now and produce a story according to design. I had a letter from one of the biggest and most important editors in America last week, a man who is himself a contributor to several magazines. He said he wanted to have a look at my stories and that being an editor was his job. "How do you know," this editor said, "whether we would like the story or not if you don't send it to us. You write your stories and don't try to be an editor."

Whatever certain magazines and many writers say about slanting a story, that theory is in part here discounted when an editor as important as this one is says send your stories to me and let me decide. This means that if I want to go to a place like Dublin in a boat and am worrying about who is going to meet me when I get there, my first job is to get in the boat and make the trip, and worry about who is going to be at the end of the trip when I get to the end. In other words, if the boat doesn't leak and I know how to row and no particular storm comes up, I'll get to Dublin. It also means in not an altogether different way that if I write a readable story and I think it is a good story, it doesn't after all make any appreciable difference where it is sent so long as stories are sought by whatever magazine you might chance upon. Of course, you wouldn't send a story on how to build a wooden horse to *Harper's Bazaar*, and yet, who knows, maybe at the time you sent it, Mrs. Aswell, who is a wonderful editor and likes well-written pieces, might find the piece about the wooden horse well written.

On the other hand I sent her a story about my father which she kindly rejected because the background for my story, women's fashions, didn't fit in with my father, since my father wasn't, in the story, fashionably dressed. In fact he wore an old suit.

That is what I mean. You have to write stories the way you have to write them. You have to make them interesting and you have to adhere to certain caprices, little handsprings and head tilts, but basically the only requirement is a good story, a well-told story, a very sincere and simply told story.

And if you want to write about as silly a trip as a boat ride to Dublin from your own lake front, from the place where you pull your boat up and tie it to a metal pole, under the willows, why go ahead and do it, and if it is well done it will, in the end, sell. And if it sells, then isn't that, after all, what you wanted it to do? Think about your markets only after you've written your piece. I know it sounds just as silly to think about where you are going after you get on a train, but don't listen to such talk. You are a writer, not an editor. Let the editor decide. You simply write your story. It will find a resting place.

□ □ □

Housing Progress, 95 Madison Ave., New York, a heavily illustrated quarterly for managers of large-scale housing developments, uses articles and short fact items designed to help such managers solve their problems, and make improvements. No fiction, verse, or serials are used. Feature articles are paid for on acceptance at "2 cents plus or minus depending on supply and quality"; fillers, on publication; photos, at \$2 to \$5 where ordered. Gustav R. Stahl is managing editor.

Free America, 112 E. 19th St., New York 3, a quarterly, pays 2 cents a word on publication for agrarian-decentralist articles, 3000 to 4000 words in length. "No political, 'cause' articles, please," says Jean Leslie Mitchell, managing editor. Supplementary rights are released to the author.

THE STUDENT WRITER

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LXXVIII—CRIME FICTION FORMULAS

(6) Crime Adventure (continued)

(Continuing from last month our examples of crime adventure fiction in the pulp detective periodicals):

SEND COFFINS FOR SEVEN. (Julius Long in *Dime Detective*, April, 1944.)

Paul Wright sells his invention, a non-recoil device for firearms, to the Warner Arms for \$100,000 and royalties. The deal concluded, one of the directors, Elwood Grant, cold-bloodedly shoots the seven other directors, forces Wright to hand back the check and contract, and escapes. Wright finds himself pursued as the logical suspect for the murders. Even his lawyer and best friend, Cliff Castle, disbelieves his story, for Elwood Grant is known to be in Europe. Wright suddenly realizes that Cliff is in the frameup against him. He knocks the lawyer out and escapes to his apartment, where he believes he can find evidence to clear himself in the note Grant wrote asking him to bring his model of the invention to the conference. At the apartment, he is captured by Hal and Rosetta Warner, two heirs to the Warner Arms. They conspire to keep him hidden until they can unload their stock—which they believe will become worthless when the murders are made known. They spirit Wright to a summer home, but are followed by two unknown men who beat up Wright unmercifully in a search for Grant's fountain pen; it appears that Wright had absently pocketed the pen and Grant fears it will be used as evidence against him. The thugs imprison Wright, Hal, and Rosetta in a cellar. They break out and are escaping when the two thugs return, followed by Cliff Castle and Edward McClean—the latter being one of the directors who was supposedly killed. It is disclosed that McClean is behind the whole plot. He hired Elwood Grant's worthless twin brother to impersonate the financier and do the shooting, to which he rendered himself impervious by wearing a bullet-proof vest. He arranged that Rosetta should discover the murders, knowing that she and her brother would try to unload their stock, which he would buy up, thus controlling the company and Wright's revolutionary invention. Cliff Castle, it turns out, is really Wright's friend, McClean having brought him along to kill him because he knows too much. McClean forces Wright to assemble his weapon, then shoots him with it. But Wright has taken advantage of the opportunity to assemble the gun backward, so that it explodes in McClean's face, killing him. Hal Warner, recognizing Wright's genius, puts him in charge of the Warner Arms.

This story follows a typical Crime Adventure trend in that the hero is plunged unexpectedly into an adventure involving conflict with criminals and is forced to battle his way through a maze of intrigue. Many of these stories are exceedingly complex, requiring long passages of explanation to clear up all details. Usually, as in this case, the villain explains the finer points of the mystery while gloating over the hero, just before attempting to kill him. This is not an example of "Deduction with Suspect Hero," even though the hero is so framed that he becomes a suspect. While his efforts are to some extent deductive, they are chiefly directed toward avoiding and combating dangerous opponents.

(A note in passing: The device of giving the murderer a seemingly perfect alibi through the substitution of one brother for another who looks just like him, is decidedly unconvincing. In real life "doubles" are rare in the extreme. An impersonator might have deceived Wright, who was unacquainted with

the real Grant, but would hardly have deceived close associates, such as fellow board members.)

Here is another complicated tangle:

K. P. CORPSE. (Robert Turner in *Ten Detective Aces*, January, 1945.)

Home on leave from the army, Dave wakes in the night to find his wife gone. Searching for her, he comes upon a dead man in a pool of blood, knife beside him, in the pantry. He recognizes the dead man as Alex Wilkes, a neighbor. A telephone call from Jean, his wife, tells him she is at an abandoned roadhouse, wants him to come there so she can tell him what happened. He goes, but fails to find Jean. Returning, he discovers that his house is on fire. He is slugged in the dark and falls unconscious. Recovering, he stops at the Wilkes house, finds it empty, but notices a poster showing that Wilkes is a hunted criminal. Mrs. Wilkes returns; when Dave questions her sharply, she calls for help, and her husband, the supposedly dead man, bursts in. After a battle, Dave overcomes the criminal pair and rescues Jean from their cellar. It develops that a federal man had traced Wilkes to his hideout. Wilkes had killed him, then kidnapped Jean. His wife forced her to make the phone call, and he himself had lain down in the pantry, covering himself with catsup to simulate blood. The idea was that after the house had burned down Dave would identify the charred body found in it (actually that of the federal man) as Wilkes. The latter and his wife could then escape without fear of further molestation.

THE SAINTLY SINNER. (Dorothy Dunn in *Detective Story*, April, 1944.)

Jane Graham has taken her husband, Bob, to a mountain lodge to recoup from his war injuries. She becomes aware that the fanatical lodge keeper, Simon St. Clair, is conspiring to kill her and her husband in order to obtain the latter's insurance, so that he can give his mentally deranged son expensive medical treatments. Simon has used hypnotic means to induce the husband to name him as beneficiary. Though terrified and seemingly at his mercy, Jane manages to foil his plot and save herself and husband.

Here again the chief character steps unwittingly into a situation involving deadly danger, and manages to come through it alive by the exercise of courage and ingenuity.

Now and then a fantastic yarn, which might just as well be found in the pages of a pseudo science magazine, gets into the detective group as a Crime Adventure. Here is one—told in light humorous vein:

ANTY CLIMAX. (Joe Archibald in *Ten Detective Aces*, January, 1945.)

Scoop and Snooty Piper, newspaper reporters, investigate the murder of Osmund Prawn. In his pocket is the picture of an ant as large as a man, which they assume to be a trick photograph. Fordyce Folrak, claiming to be a scientist friend of the deceased, leads them to his basement, where they learn that he has actually developed huge ants, with a view to letting them take over the world after exterminating the human race. The madman, who had killed Prawn, intends to feed Scoop and Snooty to the ants. Snooty saves them both by hurling a bag filled with arsenate of lead into the mouth of the first ant which is turned loose to devour them. After a battle in the basement, they escape. The house burns down, destroying its fantastic evidence, but Folrak confesses to the murder.

By a stretch of terms we could classify this as Deduction with Menace, but the reporters do little investigating. Rather, they are caught up unwittingly in the fantastic adventure.

DEATH HAS A C-BOOK. (Hal K. Wells in Thrilling Detective, April, 1944.)

Nora Malloy, girl taxi-driver, has been warned several times for traffic violations by Officer O'Connor. She picks up a couple of passengers, drops one at his destination, and presently realizes that she has been given a phony address for the other. Opening the taxi door to question him, she discovers that he has been murdered. Before she can notify police, she is intercepted by two other gangsters, finds herself involved in a conflict between two factions of racketeers who are double-crossing each other. The two gangsters force her to drive them, with the body, in search of the murderer. Realizing that, because she knows too much, they will probably leave her dead when they are through with her, Nora hopes to attract attention by violating a traffic rule, but the gangsters are alert for such devices. Nevertheless, when she passes O'Connor's "prowl car," the officer turns and follows her on general principles. Alarmed, the gangsters start to fight it out, but Nora diverts their aim by wrecking the taxi and they are captured. Wedding bells are hinted for Nora and O'Connor.

The simplicity of this yarn is in contrast to the complexity of the two preceding. Nevertheless, they employ the same general formula—the protagonist unwittingly steps into adventure involving criminals.

MURDER AT PORT-OF-SPAIN. (Knight Rhoades in Detective Story, April, 1944.)

Nikky West, girl reporter, is sent out to obtain information for a news feature and before she realizes it, is mixed up with a gang of smugglers, who assume that she is on their trail. Several attempts are made on her life, her effects are searched, important pictures and other items are stolen from her. After an exciting cross-country mystery chase she finds herself bound and helpless, captive of the mysterious "big shot" of the racket, who has made love to her but intends to murder her. Her protector, a detective, comes on the scene in time to save her, though it is necessary for her to employ desperate tactics in order to reveal her predicament to him and bring about the frustration of the villain.

The factor which catapults this heroine into an adventure is her incidental discovery of information which might bring disaster to desperate criminals. This is a familiar device. If A innocently comes upon knowledge which endangers B, it is quite logical that B will try to silence him—especially if B is criminally inclined. This means an adventure for A, and the more harrowing the predicament in which it lands him, the more satisfying will be the happy ending which extricates him—or her.

These examples should give a comprehensive idea of the Crime Adventure formula. Its possibilities are legion, and the market is avid for stories developed upon it. Whether or not the story involves deduction or other detective story features, it involves crime and criminals. This makes it a detective story in the broad interpretation of the term adopted by the action-detective periodicals.

PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

1. Locate examples of crime-adventure fiction in the pulp (and other) magazines.
2. Analyzing various examples, note what circumstance precipitated the protagonist into the adventure. Do you find much deduction involved in these yarns? Is it the hero's cleverness, or his daring

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and fighting ability that plays the greater part in extricating him from the predicament in which he has become involved?

3. Devise circumstances which could thrust an utterly unsuspecting person into a dangerous predicament involving criminals.

4. Work out a number of complete crime-adventure plots and develop the best into story form.

□ □ □ □

Mostly Personal

(Continued from Page 3)

States. Besides 60 smaller libraries, there are 27 which serve regions. They are located at Washington (D. C.), Los Angeles, Sacramento, Denver, Atlanta, Honolulu, Chicago, Jacksonville (Ill.), Indianapolis, New Orleans, Watertown (Mass.), Saginaw, Detroit, Fairbault (Minn.), St. Louis, New York City, Albany (N. Y.), Cincinnati, Cleveland, Oklahoma City, Portland (Ore.), Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Austin (Texas), Salt Lake City, and Seattle.

▲ ▲ ▲

Elizabeth Rider Montgomery ("Non-Fiction Books For Boys and Girls") responded to my request with a nice letter.

"From the time I could hold a pencil I intended to be, not a writer, but an artist. Yet I became a teacher.

"That sounds as if I had no mind of my own. Actually, I never gave up the idea of an artist's career. Teaching was intended merely as a stop-gap on the road to art. But it turned out to be, instead, the impetus that started me writing. As a first grade teacher, the primers I used did not satisfy me. I decided to dash off in my spare time a better primer than any on the market.

"There were just two things wrong with my decision. Primers can't be dashed off, and none of mine (I wrote three before I learned the sad truth) was better than the worst on the market. By the time I had discovered my mistake, however, the damage was done. The writing bug had bitten me, and I've been a writer ever since—though still in spare time.

"I wrote for six years without any success at all. Then in rapid succession I clicked in (a) greeting card verse writing, (b) textbook writing, and (c) straight fiction and non-fiction for small children.

"Nowadays I am a staff writer for Scott, Foresman and Company, educational publishers, and I freelance in other fields—chiefly the non-fiction books for older boys and girls (published by Robert M. McBride & Co.) which are the subject of my article. To date, eight of my books have been published, with the ninth and tenth slated to appear this fall, and I have written articles and stories for a number of children's magazines.

"Married, with two children, ten and five, writing will always be a side-line for me. Sometimes it is far to the side! This last winter, for instance, I wrote 'The Story Behind Great Medical Discoveries' during an endless siege of nursing my daughter after a hip injury. Helpless, in a full-length plaster cast for six months, she required constant care. I don't know yet how I managed to keep the housework done, the family fed, and get the book written, with its stupendous amount of research. I admit I don't know how I did it; but I know it can be done. So you can understand why nothing makes me so angry as to hear someone say, 'Oh, I'd like to write, but I never have time.'"

LITERARY MARKET TIPS

The Eagle Magazine, 212 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee 3, a monthly edited by Robert W. Hansen, pays 3 cents a word on publication for specific personality sketches on prominent or interesting Eagle members, articles on cities or sections of the country with some Eagle color, from 1200 to 1500 words in length. "In general," says Mr. Hansen, "we use articles on people, places, problems related to the work of the Eagles." Photos are \$5 each.

Wisconsin Agriculturist and Farmer, 1st and 3rd Sts., Racine, Wis., F. B. Swingle, editor, pays 1 to 2 cents a word for short stories of success on Wisconsin farms, illustrated with 1 or 2 photos.

Vernon H. Kurtz, Editor, Kurtz-Gusnard Publications, Rm. 316 Mack Bldg., Denver 2, writes: "This company is planning to publish a new quarterly humor magazine entitled *Humorette*. According to our present schedule, our publication should reach the market sometime within the next few months. We are, therefore, interested in obtaining humorous stories to 2000 words; articles, sketches, etc., to 1000 words; light verse, 4 to 12 lines, all types of clean jokes and finished cartoons. In general, any material that is really humorous will be considered. Payment will vary as to the merit of the material, but the minimum will be 1 cent a word on stories, articles, etc.; verse, about 25 cents a line, and jokes, \$1 each. Each artist will be dealt with individually regarding payment for finished cartoons."

Radio & Appliances, 185 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago 1, is announced for November publication. The magazine will be devoted exclusively to the radio and appliance dealer, featuring articles which will enable the individual dealer to run a more profitable operation. It will include articles on store accounting systems, record keeping, acoustics for demonstration rooms, interior decoration ideas, store exteriors, lighting for sales emphasis, personnel training and management, advertising technique, media for store promotions and campaigns, selling features and psychology, in addition to monthly departments devoted to new radios and appliances, new phonograph records, personals, government regulations, information about manufacturer's literature and displays which are available and reviews of books dealing with successful selling and merchandising.

... Rate of payment for acceptable manuscripts is from 3 to 5 cents a word, which will include all photographs and other illustrative material used with the article. On the editorial staff are Oliver Read, who heads the entire radio-group of Ziff-Davis Publishing Co., Ed DeNike, formerly advertising manager of National Union Radio Corporation, managing editor, and Joe Marty, associate editor. ... "We will welcome correspondence with qualified authors who can prepare well-written manuscripts covering the previously mentioned fields," writes Philip Lesly, of the public relations. "Articles should be dignified, and we would like to discourage the use of slang,

'corny' phrases, and 'jazzy' sentence structure if possible." Mr. Lesly suggests that prospective contributors send an outline of proposed articles before beginning preparation.

The Catholic Boy and *The Catholic Girl*, 25 Groveland Terrace, Minneapolis 5, are being edited by W. F. Lavelle, who succeeds Rev. F. E. Benz. These are 1/2-cent markets for wholesome short stories and educational articles for Catholic boys and girls.

The JC Review, 130 N. Wells St., Chicago 6, publication of the Jewish Charities of Chicago, is a wide-open market for articles of 1500 to 1800 words on social service subjects. "These articles," writes Louis Ludwig, managing editor, "may be on any subject coming under the general classification of vocational guidance, child care, family welfare, and care of the aged." Articles should be written in easy-to-read, popular style. Payment is 3 to 5 cents a word and will be made on acceptance." Mr. Ludwig promises that replies will be made within one week of receipt of articles.

The Management Research Institute, 250 Park Ave., New York 17, nationally known commercial research agency and publishers of technical research reports, is planning expansion and wants to add correspondents who are particularly specialized in interviewing and feature writing on technical subjects. Director of the Institute is Hartley W. Barclay, former editorial director of Conover-Mast Corporation.

Star Newspaper Syndicate, 80 King St. W., Toronto 1, is making arrangements for immediate expansion of its syndicate operations to include on-the-spot sales representation in Great Britain, France, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, South Africa, India, the Near East, Australia, and New Zealand. "We are now prepared," states F. P. Hotson, manager, "to establish agency arrangements with a number of selected American literary representatives, authors and artists; and simultaneously we are appointing sales agents in all the countries listed above." All material in these territories will be handled on a commission basis.

She, 521 5th Ave., New York, Bryna Ivens., executive editor, reports a slight upswing in prices paid for articles and fiction during the last few months. "In the fiction field particularly," writes Miss Ivens, "we are now able to make a real increase. ... For the time being, we are planning to use one good story per issue. We want that story to fit into our established pattern of emotional, strictly woman's appeal. We will pay a flat sum of \$100 for each story. ... We hope to be able to continue increasing our rates gradually, for all material."

Today's Woman, 1501 Broadway, New York 18, the magazine that has developed from *Life Story*, has some very specific and very immediate needs in fiction, according to Eleanor Stierhem, fiction editor.

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Liberty, Screenland, Silver Screen, and Movie Show, have been bought from Paul Hunter and the Cuneo Press by the Atlas Corporation. Address remains at 37 W. 57th St., New York 19. No immediate changes in either management or policies are contemplated.

Grosset & Dunlap and the Curtis Publishing Co. announce a new firm, directed by them, Bantam Books, Inc., which will publish 25-cent paper-bound reprints. Offices are at 1107 Broadway, New York 10. Walter Pitkin, Jr., has been named editor.

Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 232 Madison Ave., New York, is inaugurating a new mystery book department, Murray Hill Mysteries, under the editorship of Elizabeth Bullock. Four titles are on the fall list.

Mothers Home Life, 179 E. 2nd St., Winona, Minn., a monthly edited by Dorothy Leicht, pays fair rates on publication for articles 300 to 500 words in length, short-stories, 2500 to 2700 words, and short verse.

David C. Cook Publishing Co., Elgin, Ill., mentions as taboos in stories considered for *Dewdrops*, fire, knives, scares, money.

American Paint & Oil Dealer, 3713 Washington Blvd., St. Louis, is now being edited by Roland L. Meyer, Jr. Mr. Meyer seems to be having the usual "new editor" clean-up.

The California Lumber Merchant, 508 Federal Bldg., Los Angeles 14, has a policy of not paying for articles. "We have a large source of material for our columns," writes M. Adams of the editorial department.

Grain & Feed Journals, Consolidated, 327 S. La Salle St., Chicago, reports that "because paper is so difficult to obtain, and our allotment is so small we seldom can find room for anything not confined solely to the grain trade."

Distribution Age, 100 E. 42nd St., New York 17, replaces *D and W*, which formerly was *Distribution and Warehousing*, as a name more in keeping with the scope of the publication. So little free-lance material is used that any writer who feels he has a possible story should query before submitting it.

Holland's Magazine, Main and 2nd Sts., Dallas, Texas, is operating under new ownership, but there is no change in policy. Well-illustrated feature articles, 3000 words or less; clean short-short fiction, 700 to 1000 words; two- and three-part serials, 7000 to 12,000 words, and fillers of 300 to 500 words are used. Payment is made on acceptance at 1 cent a word and up, \$2 to \$4 for photos.

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